

**Minutes of the Meeting of Beeston With Bittering Parish Council held at Beeston Village Hall
on Monday 26th February 2024 at 7:00pm.**

Present: Jim Pitt, Chairman
Mark Greene
Robert Scott
Mandy Hall
Peter Cook
Natalie Arnold
Natalie Gould, Clerk

Also present: There were three members of the public present along with District and County Councillor Mark Kiddle Morris.

1 Public Forum

Rob Gibbs asked how residents without digital access get informed about the local plan. It was stated that the parcels of land put forward in the parish for the local plan have been posted in the noticeboards and that residents are welcome to come along to the parish council meetings if they would like to ask any questions. There was a good response from parishioners to the local plan enquiry and this will be discussed further later in the agenda.

Steven White requested the land registry title deed for the allotments, in order to use the land for access to the silver house. Breckland Council planners are requiring the evidence of further ownership of the drift.

2 Apologies for absence

Cllr Tucker was not present, but no apologies had been received ahead of the meeting.

3 Declarations of interest for items and applications for dispensations

Cllr Scott declared an interest in any local plan items being discussed.

4 Approve minutes of meeting 22nd January 2024

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved. This was proposed by Cllr Hall and seconded by Cllr Greene. All were in favour.

5 Norfolk District/County Report

Cllr Mark Kiddle Morris apologised for not attending for a while as he has been ill.

The Government have given £600m in funding to local authorities. Norfolk County Council received £6.4m with strings attached.

The council tax was set in February with a 5% increase all round, 2% of which will be going towards adult social care.

The county are having fierce flooding problems across the highways at the moment with too much water and nowhere to drain it to. Those landowners with ditches along the highway are being made to clear them out. If the council have to do it for them, they will be re-charged. Potholes are also a problem, but keep reporting them and the team will deal with them.

Out of the government fund, Breckland Council received £80k. A balanced budget has been set for this year.

For a lot of residents, the bin day has moved. The refuse collection centre is moving so the routes have been amended to make them more user friendly. It was noted that in 2026, food waste collections will have to start, although this is a big cost to authorities, with the need to purchase different lorries in order to do this.

6 Planning

a) Applications received

None received.

b) Applications received since the publication of the agenda

None received.

c) Planning decisions

3PL/2023/1165/LU – The Cottage, Drury Square

Application under S.192 to confirm lawfulness of proposed development under Class A (to comprise double storey extension to the rear, and single storey extension to the side and rear of the dwelling), and Class E (to erect a garage, a greenhouse, a potting shed, a home office and a chicken coop within the curtilage of the dwelling) of the General Permitted Development Order 2015 (as amended).

Approved.

3PL/2023/1171/VAR – Nirvana, The Street

Variation of Condition 1 (approved plans condition) on 3PL/2023/0618/HOU - enlargement of first floor rear bedroom window, and internal reconfigurations.

Approved

d) Planning decisions received since publication of the agenda

3DC/2023/0314/DOC – New Farm, Fransham Rd

Discharge of conditions 6, 11, 14, 15 on 3PL/2022/0833/F (Discharge Conditions)
DOC Complete

e) Enforcement updates

None

7 Correspondence

The correspondence list was reviewed.

It was noted that following an email we had received from a housing inspector, the potentially dangerous, dead trees have been reported to both the parishioner in question and to the playing field committee for further inspection.

8 Finance

a) To note Bank Reconciliations

The bank reconciliation was noted.

b) To note Accounts

The banking payments were noted.

c) To approve items for payment:

| | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---------|
| N. Gould | Salary | £172.80 |
| HMRC | Income tax | £43.20 |
| Jim Pitt | Christmas Light Batteries | £21.19 |
| ICO | Data protection renewal fee | £35.00 |
| Beeston Playing Field | Hall Hire | £32.00 |

Cllr Pitt proposed that the payments were agreed and Cllr Hall seconded. All were in favour.

d) To approve payment of invoices received since the publication of the agenda

There were no additional invoices.

9 Action Log

The action log was reviewed and the following updates were noted.

Cllr Scott has looked into digger hire for the cleaning out of the Millenium Lakes. A 13ton lorry costs around £750/week. Cllr Scott has offered to provide a suitable driver for the digger. A letter has been prepared to be distributed to a range of persons or business that may be able to assist in some way. **ACTION:** Cllr Scott will send the letter out. A tentative time scale is set for June.

Cllr Greene will liaise with Cllr Cook to find out the number of people who mentioned the need for a village shop from the survey and report it to Breckland to see if this would be enough to gain an asset of community value on the old shop.

10 Local Plan Comments

Following the latest request by Breckland Council for comments on the local plan, each of the counsellors decided to submit their own personal responses. One of the key changes is that Beeston had now been classed by Breckland Council as a Local Service Centre, despite it not meeting the full criteria they themselves use to assess this.

Information had been shared on social media which prompted lots of comments.

Anything mentioning Beeston has been picked out. The predominant view is that people do not want to be a local service centre. There were 2 positive views, 8 neutral views, and 49 negative views.

Does the public understand what it means to be a local service centre?

Cllr Kiddle Morris stated that Litcham has been a local service centre for many years, although there has been a minimal amount of delivery in the last 15 years due to other constraints, such as highways rejections. Being a local service centre does not necessarily mean all of the houses put forward would be approved – each application will be assessed individually on its own merits. When asked the question “what is the difference to Beeston if it is a local service centre or remains a village, with regards to planning?”, the answer was “not a lot”.

Cllr Scott stated that although he doesn’t dispute the fact that Beeston doesn’t meet the criteria for a local service centre, there are lots of people that have grown up in the village and can’t afford to buy a house in the village. There is a need for some development to cater for the needs of the people and bring footfall in for the pub. Negative social media posts have perhaps impacted these views with not all of the information.

11 Mental Health Training

A few months ago a lady came to talk to us about the training Breckland were providing to become a mindful village by offering various mental health awareness training sessions. Cllr Arnold has attended the bereavement training.

ACTION: The communities officer is to be asked if outside training counts towards this goal.

12 D-day event & Beacon

The D-day anniversary is the 6th June and if we were to run an event, the beacon would be lit at 9.15pm. The village hall has been provisionally booked for that evening. As there are historical links to the village, there is a desire to do something.

ACTION: The counsellors are to gather some ideas for the event for further discussions.

13 2024 Events

It has been discussed previously that councillors would attend community events in their Parish Councillor position and volunteers will be needed to cover these.

ACTION: The list of 2024 community events, run by the Playing Field committee will be circulated by Cllr Arnold.

ACTION: Printed hi-vis jackets will be looked into to wear at events attended in a parish councillor capacity.

14 Potholes

The procedure for reporting potholes is to be circulated via the Church and Village magazine and on social media.

15 Christmas Tree

The prices of a Christmas tree to plant on the village green is around £1000 for a height of 2.5-3m.

ACTION: Cllr Pitt will contact a Christmas tree seller to ask if they would be willing to donate one in exchange for advertising.

16 Village Survey Takeaways

Cllr Cook put together a highlighted report of the results from the village survey.

ACTION: These are to be published on the noticeboard, website and social media.

17 Litter Picking

Historically litter picking has been done by a parishioner. It is usually done twice a year and is now to be taken over by the Parish Council. Beeston school would also like to join forces on a community litter pick.

Breckland Council have kit that they usually lend out. Cllr Scott stated that full bags can be placed in the farm yard, ready for collection. This should be done before the verges grow too much. Two volunteers would like to help as part of their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze award.

ACTION: Cllr Pitt will coordinate the work.

18 Grass Cutting Contract

The councillors would like to assess the current maintenance contract and make sure value for money is being achieved.

ACTION: Ask the current supplier how many cuts are done per year and what the current agreement is.

19 Millenium Lakes Footbridge

There is a duty of care to look at a railing for the bridge.

ACTION: Cllr Pitt will measure and get quotes for a guardrail and will be discussed at the next meeting.

20 School Parking Note

In the village survey, school parking was noted as an issue. The school have asked the Parish Council if they could draft a note to be sent out to parents as it may have more clout.

ACTION: Cllr Arnold will draft the note for approval.

Key points will include; feedback from the village survey, speed awareness results & child safety. The note should also address the entrances to school farm so that they are not blocked.

21 Online Payments Procedure

We now have the ability to pay bills via online banking. A procedure has been drafted, outlining the use of the service. All councillors have reviewed and no amendments were made.

ACTION: A rota will be put together for who will approve the transactions.

It was noted that an old Village of the Year sign has been sat in storage. It was agreed by all that this can go up again where it used to be.

ACTION: It was requested that the police are chased up for a rural crime report on anything happening in the locality.

22 Agenda items for meeting in March 2024

- Speedwatch update
- Millenium Lakes footbridge update

Meeting closed at 8.52pm.

Date of next Parish Council meeting: 25th March 2024 at 7:00pm